

*A New
Twenty-Third Psalm*

REV. ANEES T. BAROODY, Ph.D.

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By

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REV. ANEES T. BAROODY, Ph. D.

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book is mainly a lecture which has been given in many American churches. The demand has been so great for it that I have felt constrained to have it published so that all those who are interested in the sheep-life of the Holy Land, especially the life pictured in the immortal "Shepherd Psalm," may be able to secure a copy of it as a permanent possession.

I am a native of Mt. Lebanon, Syria. My father was a Catholic and my mother a Greek Orthodox. My childhood was spent in a small village on that beautiful mountain called Ain Errommaneh (Spring of the Pomegranate). I am a graduate of the American College in Beirut, of McCormick Theological Seminary and of New York University.

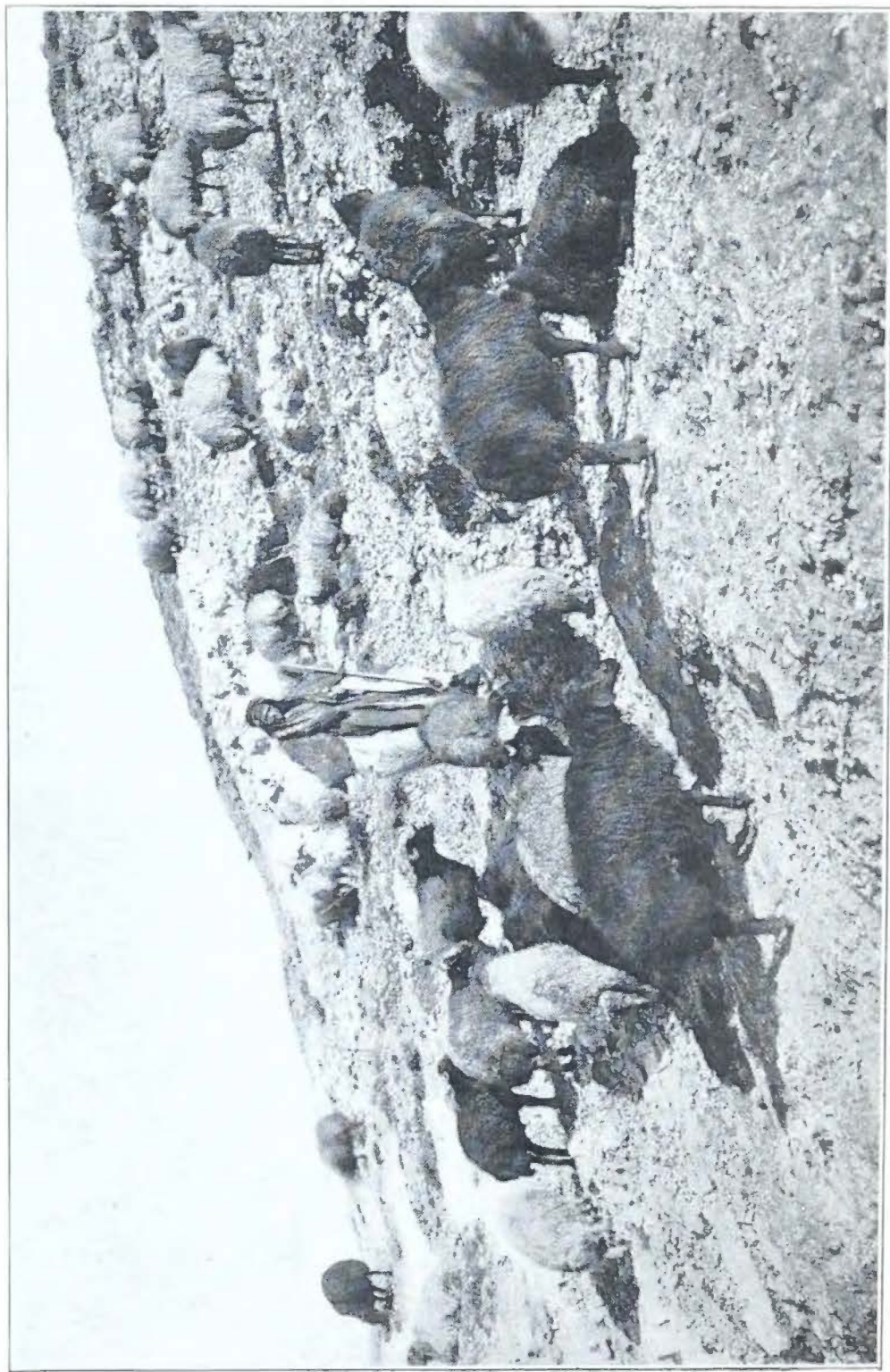
ANEES T. BAROODY.

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*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;
Thou that sittest above the cherubim,
shine forth.* Ps. 80:1.

*He will feed his flock like a shepherd,
he will gather the lambs in his arm,
and carry them in his bosom, and will
gently lead those that have their young.*
Is. 40:11.



A MIXED FLOCK OF MOOR AND MALOOF SHEEP.



A NEW TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

SHEEP-LIFE in the Holy Land presents itself in two aspects—the flock-life and the single life. As in both these aspects the shepherd is the most important figure, we cannot grasp the full significance of the sheep-life without first of all acquiring a correct knowledge of this world-famed, Holy-Land character, the *shepherd*. No Christian need hardly be reminded that the very founders of the Hebrew religion, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were shepherds. They were men who slept in the open on the beautiful hills of Judea and conversed, amid the sublime silence of the Holy-Land night, with the bold stars, yea, with God Him-

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self. Their rough woolen garments became wet with dew, but their hearts waxed warm on account of their communion with the God of Bethel. Even Christ's coming to the world was first announced to shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem.

As I turn my eyes toward the Holy-Land pastures, two Arabic words rise before my mind—*afha* and *rahi*, the first meaning *serpent*, and the second *shepherd*. When the word *afha* is mentioned in a Holy-Land gathering, a feeling of horror and disgust sweeps over the soul. In the very pronunciation of it you hear the hideous sound of the blowing of breath and venom of the deadly serpent among the gray rocks and the thick bushes of Mt. Lebanon, as I have heard it after dusk many a time in my life. If one is bitten by a Lebanon *afha* or *hanash*, he

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falls dead in less than thirty minutes. The majority of our people shun the telling of serpent stories in their evening conversations lest the active Oriental imagination should conjure up in the night unpleasant dreams.

But the word *rahi* is just the opposite. This word seems to waft upon the soul the sweet breeze of the fatherly goodness and untiring care of a strong leader, or God. *Rahi*—shepherd. The very word seems to have in it the sweet music of the Lebanon brooks and waterfalls, the humming of tireless bees on the flower-carpeted hillocks of Mt. Gilead, the whistling of the partridges on the shoulders of Hermon, and the dreamy sighing of the Mediterranean breeze in the ancient cedars. Why, in this word *rahi* we hear the soothing music of Paradise and smell the fragrance of the eternal hills of God.

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SHEPHERD AND HIRELING

Distinction must be made also at the outstart between the *malik* and the *ajeer*, or the shepherd who owns the sheep and the shepherd who is only a hireling. There are some wealthy individuals, like the famous Job of old, or like the many retired farmers in America, who hire strong men to shepherd their sheep. These hired men are called hirelings. Christ says in John 10:12, "He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them." The hireling cannot say, "These are my sheep." The precious feeling of possession is not in him; consequently, instead of acting the hero in the time of danger and risking his life for the sheep, he acts the coward.

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The best example I know of this coward is a goat I saw in the Chicago stockyards in the spring of 1905. I was looking at the man who was slaughtering the sheep, when my attention was called to a goat in one of the corners of the sheep's killing-pen. Here the sheep are being jerked off their feet by a small chain hooked into a ring upon a large revolving cog-wheel, lifted up and shunted off upon a trolley and sent down, swinging pitifully, toward a grim-visaged man on the other side, who very dexterously and nonchalantly slits their throats with an extremely sharp knife. Such a scene of helplessness makes one wish that the world might stop eating mutton.

But the main object of my interest is the goat in the corner. There it is, looking back with treacherous eyes at the sheep that are being hoisted and

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sent to the slaughter, two at a time. There is no pity in those dark eyes. No sooner the last sheep is gone than it runs, with the speed of a special-delivery mail-carrier, to an open door leading to the civilized fold of the sheep, and lures, with the air of an expert trustworthy leader, the silly sheep to the killing-pen; and then, with an uplifted head, it poses as a sentinel on duty in a safe corner awaiting another opportunity.

Previous to that visit to the Chicago stockyards I had been very fond of goats and goatherds. I had always enjoyed watching the goat on Mt. Lebanon throw its fore legs on a young oak and nibble off the leaves of the low-hanging branches, or scale some very steep ledges of rock in search for a hidden tuft of grass. I could see a spirit of wild, yet likeable, adventure in that

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black restless animal. But after that visit I felt disgusted with the goat, and when I went back to Syria I could hardly enjoy watching again the goat on the mountain top. The only thing that gave me a little relief was the undeniable fact that the stockyard's goat was not a Syrian. But after all, the goat is a goat, and the goat, as a rule, is despised even in Syria. When the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats he sets the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left (Matt. 25:33).

That perfidious goat is rightly called at the stockyards a decoy, but I call it a hireling. It has been hired and trained to lead the simple unsuspecting sheep to the slaughter. You know which power that goat represents in the world—the power of darkness! It is the power that lures the innocent in-

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to the paths of sin. According to Jack London it is John Barleycorn, and according to ex-Governor Patterson it is the booze or accursed saloon. Yea, it is that mysterious power which has enthralled millions and millions of the human race, blasted their swelling hopes, blighted their noble aspirations, and dropped poison into the most sacred parts of their beings. That hireling is a murderer, the cause of the present terrific clash between the two gigantic combinations of European powers.

A few days ago I went to the stock-yards to have a look at the decoy which I had not seen for ten years. The guide who took me around tendered the following striking information: "It is a remarkable fact," he said, "that some of the sheep-stickers go crazy. There is a certain pathetic look in the eyes of

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the sheep, which are not much unlike the eyes of human beings, a look of pleading helplessness which touches the sticker's heart and in the course of time may unbalance his mind. One of the stickers at Swift's went crazy nine years ago, and one in Boston fifteen years ago. The sheep struggles not nor squeals, but only looks at the murderer in a very piteous manner as if to say, 'What have I done unto thee?' "

"Don't the hog stickers ever go crazy?" asked I.

"O no," he answered. "The hog is a wild beast. You throw the hog a piece of its brother's flesh and it will eat it up with avidity."

My heart was touched at this new revelation and I felt extremely sad. I thought of the One of whom the Bible says, "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before

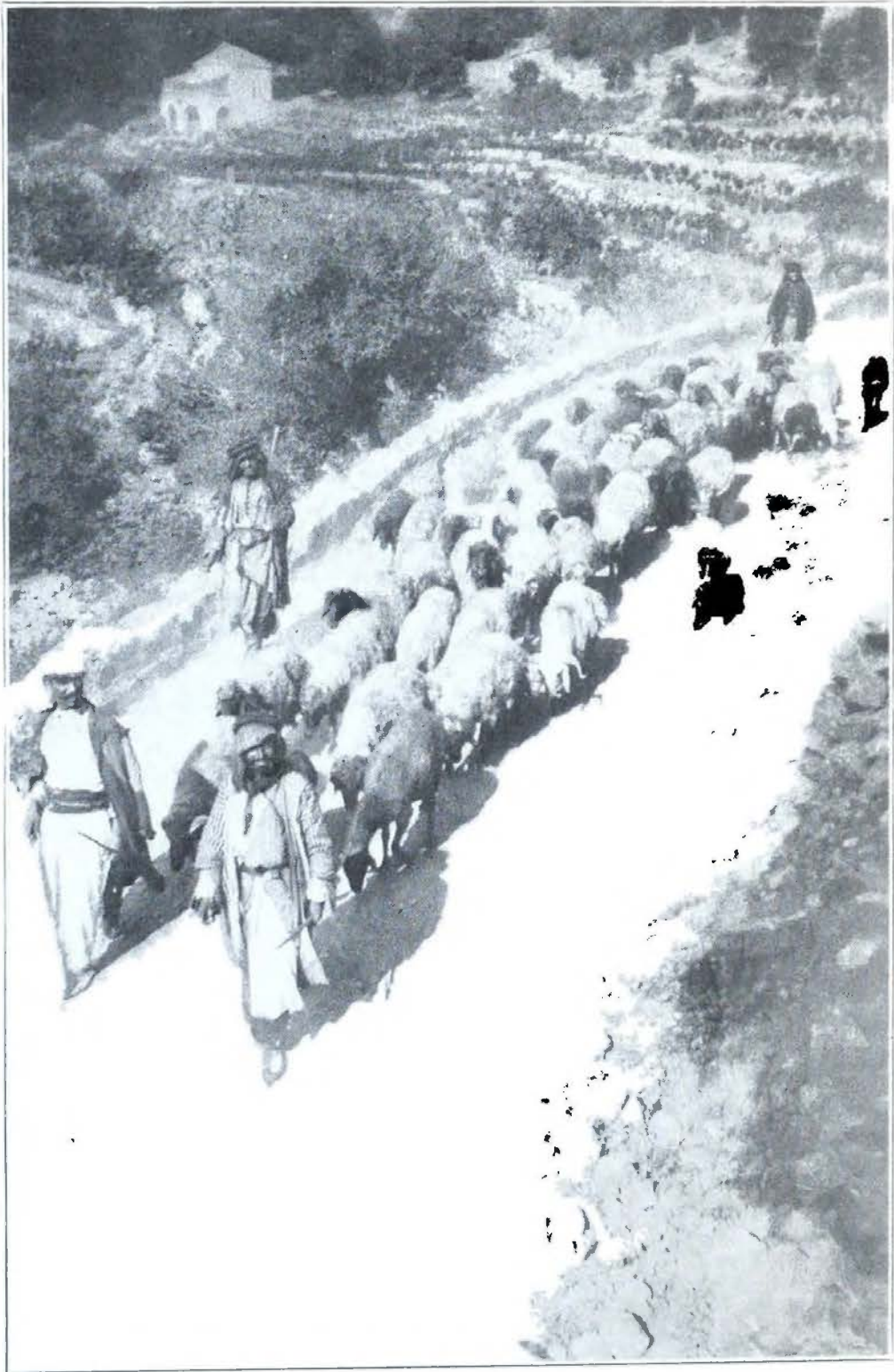
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its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." I thought also once more of the thousands and thousands of sheep-murderers, who lead innocent creatures to the slaughter for trifling wages, the wages of Judas Iscariot, and I prayed that they might only look in the eyes of their victims.

But it is not my object to dwell long upon this unpleasant side of our subject. If you bear in mind the sharp difference which exists between an owner and a hireling, or between the *malik* and the *ajeer*, I will proceed to the first of the two aspects of the sheep-life; namely,

THE FLOCK-LIFE

We have a kind of sheep in Syria called *moor*. Its wool is generally white, its tail is round and large, weighing sometimes about twenty-five



A FLOCK OF MOOR SHEEP ON MT. LEBANON.

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pounds, and it goes in flocks of various sizes. It is not uncommon to see in the great plain of Bukaa', between the two Lebanons, a flock of five hundred sheep or more, led by two or three shepherds and accompanied by a dog or two.

On my way from London to Keswick in the summer of 1904, as the express train was dashing along at earth-shaking speed, I saw little white animals scattered over a hill in the distance, and I asked a lady on the opposite seat if she could kindly tell me what they were. Looking sleepily out she said, "Why, they are rabbits." But, on looking more intently, she discovered her mistake and said, "I beg your pardon, they are sheep." That astonished me, for, having left the Holy Land only ten days before, I had never seen sheep go around in that fashion. In my home I had been accustomed to see them go

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in flocks, and it would not be at all easy to separate one sheep from the rest of the flock. The sheep would struggle and bleat and almost grow mad. I have seen some men tie a rope around the struggling sheep's neck and drag the poor sheep away by sheer force, until the flock had gone out of sight. How nice it would be if all the Christians in the world could be made to understand the power that lies in the ideal unity of a flock of sheep on the slopes of Lebanon!

MOOR SHEEP

Thus you see it is the *moor* sheep in Syria that lives the flock-life. It goes with a large company of brother-sheep, shades its head under their tails from the burning noon sun, rests in the midst of them underneath an oak or pine, grazes alongside of them on pas-

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ture-grounds, and thus becomes accustomed to a life of fellowship from which it could not be easily torn away.

In order to grasp the full significance of the flock-life we ought to spend a day with the shepherd of the fifteenth chapter of Luke. Our shepherd of the parable of the one hundred sheep returns home with his flock in the evening. His little village, nestling most restfully on the shoulders of a Lebanon hill, in the midst of a fascinating circle of ancient pines and oaks, looks from the adjacent sea-coast like a piece of a new paradise. The sheep, being tired, are led straight to the fold, where they are counted and left to rest. Then the shepherd goes home, washes his face and feet, takes supper, and returns to the fold. In a land such as Palestine, where there are no movies or theaters or any other popular amusements, time

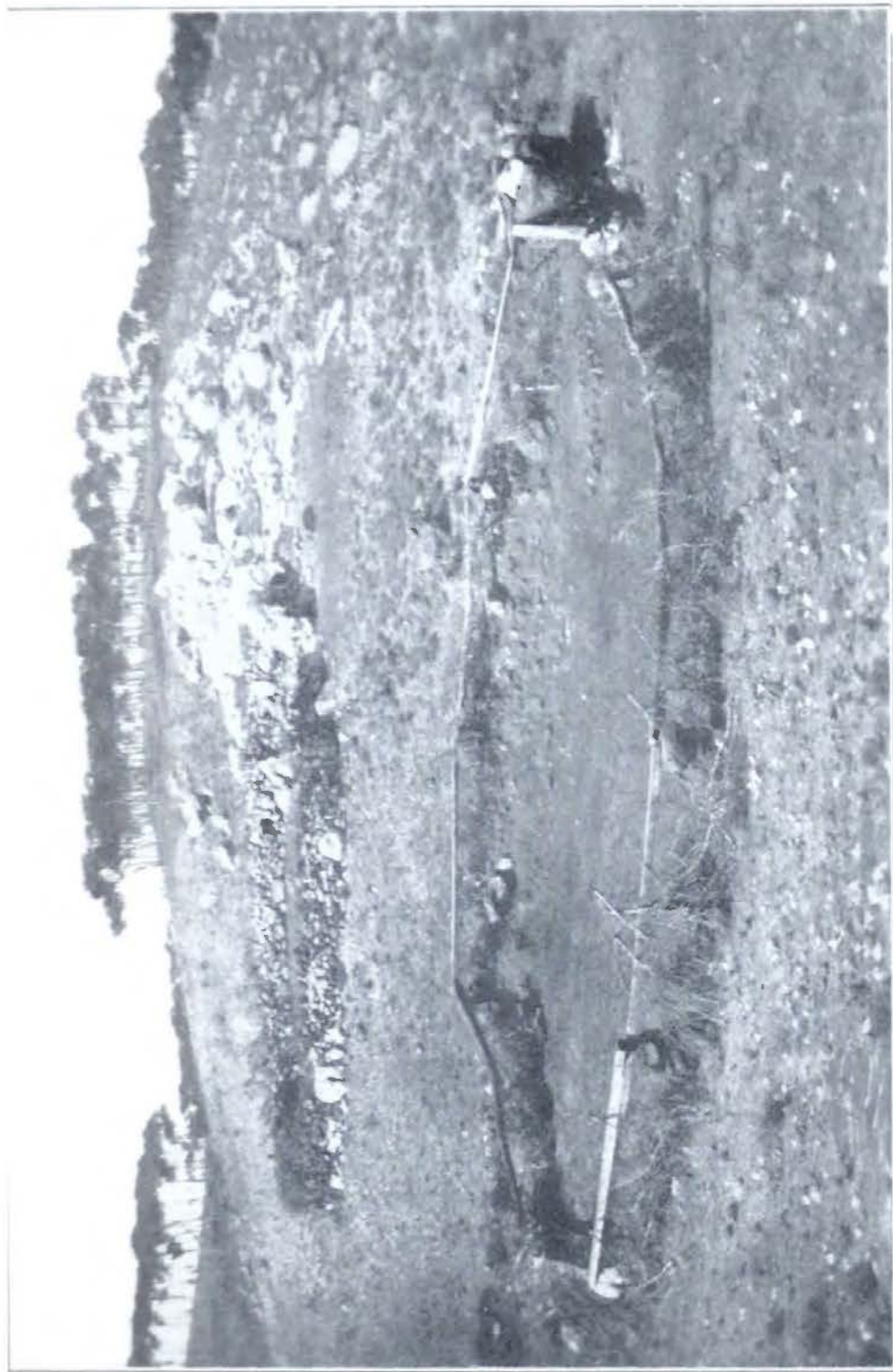
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weighs heavy upon many people. Thus early in the evening our shepherd spreads his bed across the door of the fold, lays his heavy rod by his side, and sings himself quietly and happily to sleep.

CHRIST THE DOOR .

Does not this remind us of the meaning of Christ when he said, "I am the door"? During the long silence of the Lebanon night the wolves may prowl around the fold, the thieves may peep over the wall, but the mere presence of the shepherd at the door is sufficient to hold all the enemies of the sheep at bay. Let the nervous, fear-tortured Christian take courage, for, as long as the Son of God, the Good Shepherd, is at the door of his heart all the enemies of the soul dare not touch him.

One August evening, about ten years



TWO SHEEPFOLDS ON MT. LEBANON.

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ago, there were some shepherds, at a distance of about half a mile from our summer tenting-place on Mt. Lebanon, in a spot called Bukullaa', about five thousand feet above sea level. Just as I was getting ready to go to bed the shepherds raised a tremendous hulla-baloo and fired many shots. I walked toward them with a lantern in hand. On arriving I saw two shepherds sitting in the door of the fold, which was nothing more than a circular enclosure with a bramble-topped wall about five feet high. In answer to my inquiry regarding the noise they had raised one of the two shepherds said, gesticulating very fervently:

“Why, some of these sheep are very silly. A wild beast came our way a few minutes ago and, of course, I was awake and instantly fired at it. But this stupid sheep became hysterical and

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jumped over the wall of the fold down to the thorn-choked terraces. Had I not found it, it would have doubtlessly been devoured in the night. It was its frightened bleating that attracted me to it."

On the way back to the tents I thought of the hundreds of human beings who jump out of the fold into the engulfing darkness of the world, merely because they have heard the sound of an approaching enemy. They think more of the tearing power of the wolf's teeth than of the exceedingly superior saving power of an ever-present, ever-awake shepherd or God. In other words, they doubt God's keeping power. They are the Sauls of all times who contemplate the hazardous act of seeking the counsel of soothsayers and necromancers, and, like hens charmed by the glare of the fox's eyes, they jump

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out of the fold only to land between the enemy's open jaws.

The next morning I was told by the younger of the two shepherds that the day before they had had to use their rods very mercilessly upon the back of a thief who had attempted to carry away in broad daylight the fattest sheep they had. To accomplish his bad design and escape unseen that bold thief had put on a cloak made of sheep-skin from which the wool had not been taken off, and crept stealthily on his hands and feet like a quadruped until he reached the flock. Of course the sheep did not run away and the dogs did not bark because he looked exactly like a sheep. But while attempting to carry *aitoor* (the sheep's name) away the ever-watchful eyes of Abu-Saad (the older shepherd's name: it means father-of-happiness) caught sight of him, and

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he was beaten to within an inch of his life.

“Beware of false prophets,” says Christ, “who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves (Matt. 7:15).”

Early in the morning the shepherd gets up, drinks a cup of coffee, and takes a very simple breakfast. He wraps up his dinner in a piece of cloth and ties it around his waist over the native cloak, thus making the cloak form a long pouch running around his back, in which he sometimes carries the lambs. See Isaiah 40:11. Then he sticks the rod into the side of his cloak, just over the heart, and takes the staff in his right hand and calls the sheep, counting them as they come out to be sure of their exact number.

Here is one of the most common, but very impressive and instructive, scenes

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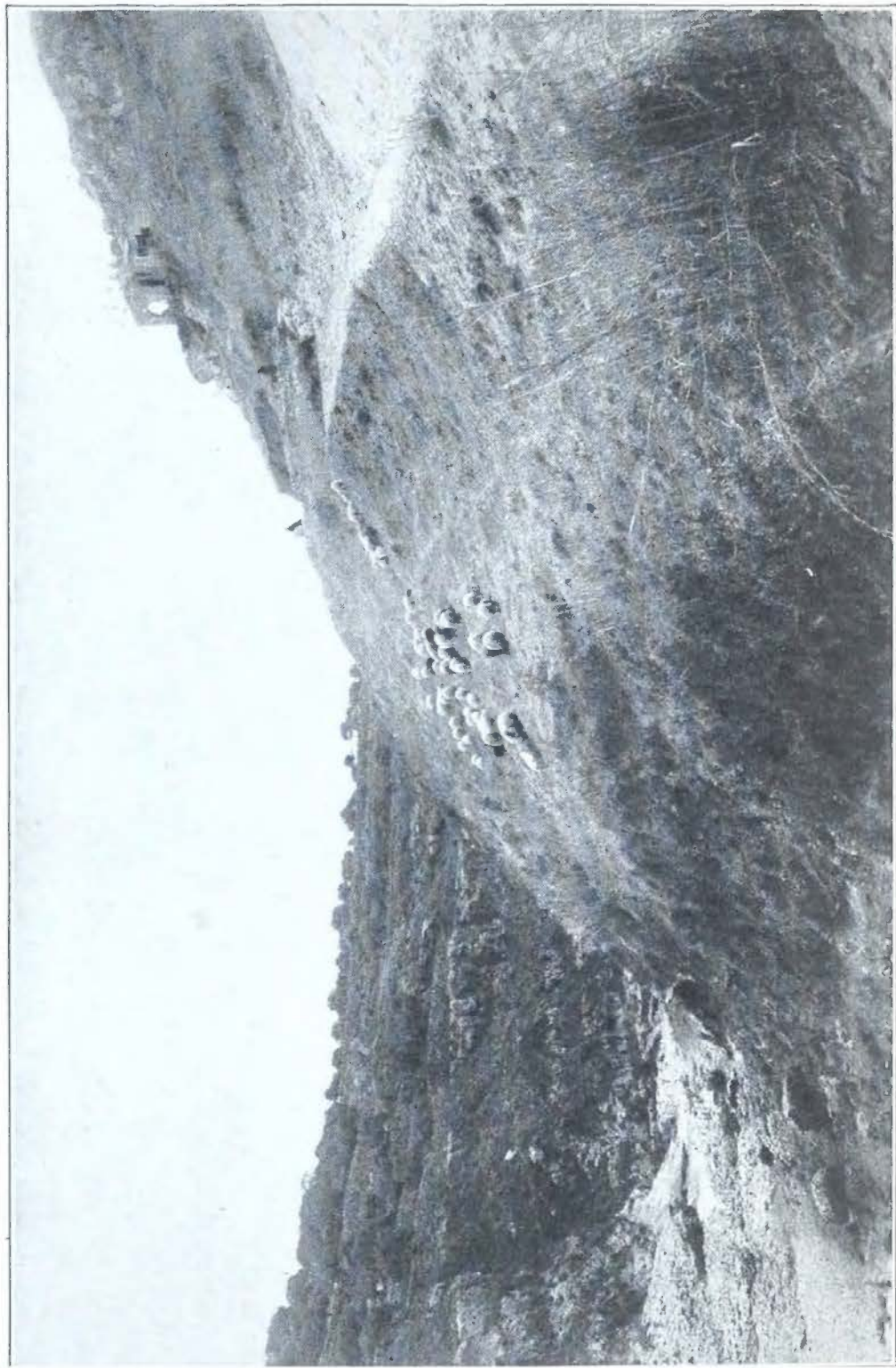
in the sheep-life—the shepherd is walking slowly in front of his sheep calling them, Ho-ho, ho-ho, ta, ta, ta, hir-r-r-ray, and as the timid creatures stop every now and then on hearing the least rustle or sound, the shepherd is seen coaxing them and encouraging them in his own way to follow him.

How real the picture! You remember the day you laid your father, your mother, your husband, your wife, your son, or your daughter in the cold grave. You recall how you felt when you went back home. Everything dark and heartbreaking. You remember the silent conversation you held with your innermost self, how in your ignorance of God's workings you complained, "Why should God afflict me seeing that I am one of his followers?" Then suddenly you heard a still small voice, gentler than the Mediterranean spring

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breeze, whisper in your ears, "My child, take courage; go on, go on." Thus he coaxed you, encouraged you, put life and energy into your fainting heart and led you to where you are now. That is the shepherd of whom I am speaking these days, and he is the same to-day as he was thousands of years ago.

Another well-tested fact is noteworthy in this connection. If a stranger should put on the shepherd's usual dress and stand in front of the sheep and call them to follow him, he would be utterly disappointed. The sheep would stare at him wondering for a while, and then they would turn around and jostle each other back in fright. And if he should try to draw close to them and coax them, they would edge away from him, bleating pathetically. Even if he should offer them the most tempting mulberry



MOOR SHEEP ON PASTURE GROUNDS. THE SHEPHERD IS SITTING ON A ROCK JUST
BEYOND THEM.

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leaves, they would not look at him fondly and follow him with the air of implicit trust with which they would follow their shepherd. It would take him many days of the closest touch with them to win their trust. Read in this light what Christ says: "And the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Would to God that these words were true of all the present-day Christians!

Let us walk with the Syrian shepherd out into the wilderness or the pasture. On and on he goes until he reaches a place beautifully carpeted by the green grass. He turns the sheep into it, and walks ahead of them to a rock on top of a high cliff. There he sits and looks down the valley to the cheerful stream singing the spring hours away hundreds

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of feet below. Then he takes out his *zammoor* (reed) from underneath his belt and plays away one hour after another, filling the wilderness with music. The birds rejoice at this addition to their orchestra and start singing more vehemently.

Here I beg to call your attention to one sheep in that busily-moving flock. It is a strong sheep and is accustomed to venture to little secluded corners and very steep places where very often the best grass is found. There it is grazing by itself. One tuft after another disappears before its sharp teeth. After an hour or two this bold sheep looks around for its comrades and finds them not. It runs in all directions bleating as hard as it can, but no shepherd's voice comes back in response. At last while darting blindly around it falls over a precipice. Dazed and wounded it lies among the rocks.

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As the evening draws near the poor creature begins to shake from terror. The wolves are howling on the other side of the valley. It cannot be more than a few hours before they find it out. It can see the wild glare of the eyes of those rapacious beasts; it can see their terrible drawn-out tongues; it can see their bloody teeth which have been sharpened by gnawing the bones of other animals. In such a miserable condition of fright the poor sheep lies awaiting its inevitable doom.

Is not this a picture of some human being who has strayed away from the warm, genial home where he was born? The voice of his self-sacrificing mother no longer rings with tones of celestial music in his ears. By following the deceptive mirage of this world's pleasures he has lost his shepherd. And now there he is—a wounded, bruised, wretched, friendless, hopeless, terror-

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stricken wreck of humanity. Sin has poisoned his blood, sapped his vitality, thrown him over the precipice, and left him in the wilderness to die, away from the shepherd's fold. What a sad picture!

What does the shepherd do? Toward eventide he counts the sheep and, to his great astonishment, he finds only ninety-and-nine. He counts them over and over again. One is missing, one is missing! After taking two or three sweeping glances at the flock he ascertains which is the missing one. If Rockefeller should lose one dollar on the golf-links he would not go back at such an hour of the day to make a thorough search for it. Not even for ten sheep would a territorial magnate go back alone to a wolf-haunted wilderness half an hour before sunset. It is only one, and our shepherd might

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as well go home without it. Never!—he loves that sheep and he cannot entertain the idea of losing it. Only one—only one—but love takes more consideration of the lost one than of the ninety-and-nine which are not lost. To love, to lose is inconceivable. Love spells *l-o-s-t* and weeps. The mere idea of loss wounds the heart, especially when vanishes all hope of finding the lost one. *Lost forever* is only another way of expressing what Dante saw written over the entrance of hell. *Lost forever*. The shepherd meditates. No more hope, no more joy, no more sweet friendship, no more happy home, no more sunshine, no more looking in each other's eyes in mutual adoration, but *lost forever!*

Our tender-hearted shepherd cannot bear to gaze long at such an agonizing picture of loss. There he leaves the

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ninety-and-nine in a safe place in the wilderness and goes back to search for the lost sheep. Watch him as he reaches the first valley. There he fells down a wolf with one blow of his heavy-headed rod. He looks around, but the sheep is nowhere to be found. He crosses the brook and runs up to the top of the adjacent hill. Standing on a high rock, he traverses with his sharp-sighted eyes all the surrounding land, calling the lost sheep by its name at the top of his voice. Then he listens—but no voice is heard save the hollow murmuring of the brook and the vesper chanting of the birds.

His heart sinks. Then on he dashes until he reaches another hill. Again he calls, but the sheep is nowhere to be found. "Shall I go farther," says he to himself, "or shall I go back?" No, no! he cannot go back. He hears the

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wolves howling far away on the other side of the valley. He knows that if the sheep is not immediately found out by him it will surely be scented out by the prowling wolves and devoured. What a horrible picture rises before his excited mind!—that of the dear sheep attacked by wolves, the bleating in terror, the blood, the mangled flesh, etc. There is enough in this picture to nerve him.

Again he runs from one rock to another, looking into every ditch and every corner and every crag and every cave, until at last he reaches a low rugged precipice and, peeping down, he sees the poor creature lying between two rocks. In its desperate struggle it has wounded itself in several places. On seeing the shepherd it trembles and bleats faintly. But he does not strike it for straying,

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he does not reproach it, he does not utter a single unkindly word, he does not even frown at it. Stooping down, he takes hold of it by its legs, lifts it up, lays it gently on his shoulders, and starts home rejoicing. The blood flows from its wounds down his shoulders, but that does not annoy him. He loves the sheep, and now his joy over the finding of it is unbounded.

On reaching his home he lays down the sheep, and then, unable to contain himself from joy, he dashes out and goes to the home of the first neighbor and says, "I've found my lost sheep. Come and take supper with me—come, wife, children, and all." Then to the next neighbor, and the next, saying the same thing, until everybody in the village is invited. A real night of rejoicing follows which stirs the whole neighborhood.

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Is not this a splendid living picture of God's love to man? Nineteen centuries have elapsed since Christ's ascension and the world has not yet comprehended God's wonderful love. The sun and the moon and the stars have gazed and wondered, but the hard heart of man has not yet fully responded to the throbs of Christ's tender heart. The lily of the field has silently reveled in its calm delight over the brilliant robe in which God has clothed it, a robe far more glorious than any of Solomon's robes, and has sent up to Heaven the sweet perfume of its gratitude; but the wicked, selfish, perverted man has sent up only his shameless haughty utterances of indifference and vaunts of unbelief. He has turned away from God, and he is now lost in the wilderness of sin. "We," says Tennyson, addressing God, "are fools and slight. We mock Thee

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when we do not fear." And Tennyson is right.

There are many tyros of religious philosophy nowadays who seem to take delight in thinking that we have outgrown the gospel of love, and that the pleading minister or evangelist must be turned on pension. They say that the days of Wesley and Spurgeon and Moody, days of emotional, tearful appeals to sinners, have already been relegated into the sacred eternities of the past; and that days of rigid free-thinking and dry merciless dissection and analysis of religious truths have come in their stead.

This insignificant Oriental who stands before you in the garb of a Holy-Land shepherd is very humbly inclined to join issue with those tyros. It is a well-known scientific fact that the higher we rise in the scale of evolution,

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the more complex the nervous system becomes. And the more complex the nervous system becomes, the stronger and deeper the emotional nature becomes, at the top of which, of course, stands love in its queenly dignity. The hog, whose meat you enjoy eating in America, does not hesitate a second to eat up its brother's flesh. I have seen many a cat strike at its offspring and snatch away a piece of meat from between its very teeth. But the highest specimen of man manifests a deep feeling of disinterested love, not only toward his kindred, but toward all mankind, and even toward the mute creation.

If there be any message in the sheep-life of the Holy Land it must be the old message of love, the greatest message this world has ever known, or will ever know. The grandest picture that the

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Holy Land has painted and hung on the wall of the great gallery of this art-loving world, a picture far more valuable than the rarest rubies, is that of the Lebanon shepherd striding back home from the wilderness at eventide with a poor, trembling, bleeding sheep on his shoulders! Every time that the shepherd calls his sheep the heart of the Deity throbs a little faster. And if the results of some psychical researches are correct, there is as much difference between God's feelings of love and our own feelings as there is between our feelings and those of the cannibals and the lower brutes. The shepherd's voice on the hills of Lebanon is the voice of immortal love, and his gospel is a gospel of saving love. We shall not understand the wonders of God's love until after we have laid aside this fleshly machine.

THE MIXED LIFE

At this point I beg to call your attention to a phase of flock-life which is not very common, but which, nevertheless, deserves some notice. This phase may be called the mixed life.

Seven years ago I was one summer afternoon resting on Mt. Lebanon in the shade of a huge walnut growing at a stone's throw from *mugaret afka*, which is a large and deep cave in the limestone cliff from which flows the Springs of Adonis, now called *nahr Ibrahim*. While on the point of yielding to the slumbrous influence of the dreamy breeze a tremendous jingling of bells gave me a sudden start, thus frightening away the shy white-winged doves of sleep, and made me look backward. What did I see but a shepherdess, a girl of not more than fifteen, short,

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lithe and badly sun-burnt, followed by a flock composed of about thirty goats and five sheep. That was a new sight to me. Although the Old Testament states that Rachel (Gen. 29:9) and the seven daughters of the priest of Midian (Ex. 2:16) were shepherdesses, I had never before seen a girl leading alone a flock of sheep to pasture-grounds. Nor had I ever seen goats and sheep going together in one flock.

Perceiving there was something noteworthy I rose from my reclining posture. The goats looked, as they browsed along, as vigorous as any goats I had ever seen, but the sheep were wearied and worn out as if they had been making forced marches for several days. One of the sheep was limping badly, which fact gave me a pretext to talk with the shepherdess.

“What is the matter with that poor sheep?” inquired I.

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She shrugged her shoulders and answered: "I don't know. I only noticed it this morning. Maybe it had a fight in the night with the he-goats." Then she added, "You know, it won't do to keep the goats and the sheep together. But I can't help it. Those sheep have become so accustomed to the goats that they won't stay at home without them. I'm afraid we shall have to sell those sheep before they become completely goatlike."

A cursory look over the life-history of some persons we know will reveal the sad fact that a mixed life is, ninety cases out of a hundred, disastrous to Christian happiness. Unless the sheep are determined to thwart the evil plans of the goats and to temper down their spirits, and, in a word, convert them and make them sheeplike, they must not live in the midst of them. Unless it is the Christian's purpose to help sinners and

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lead them out from darkness into light, it is very unwise for him to live in the midst of them. To be on the offensive, and not neutral or on the defensive, is the only plausible excuse for living the mixed life. "And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" . . . "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."—See II Cor. 6:14-18.

2. THE SINGLE LIFE

This is the life of which we read in the twenty-third psalm. It has been the persistent mistake of the expounders of the psalms to consider the sheep of the twenty-third psalm as a member of a flock, and the life presented in the psalm as the life of a flock and not of one individual sheep. They picture the flock grazing in the green pastures and drinking of the still waters and



THE PET SHEEP IS BEING RESTORED FROM THE WHEAT-FIELDS TO THE RIGHT PATH.

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walking in the straight paths, etc. That is a great mistake, as you shall see.

We have a kind of sheep in Palestine called *malooof*, which means overfed or stuffed. This sheep is larger than the *moor* which I have already described. Its wool is short and generally black. It is a very pretty animal, having sweet hazel eyes, a nicely shaped head, and slender legs resembling those of Gilead's gazelle. Add to this an air of innocence and docility and you will not wonder that John considered it fit to be taken as an emblem of Christ. There is no comparison in beauty between our *malooof* sheep and the American sheep that I have seen in the Chicago stockyards. Your sheep look to me more like some of the pariah dogs of Beirut and Constantinople than anything else.

This *malooof* sheep, although when

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young it goes in flocks, lives the principal part of its life as somebody's private property. In the early part of summer most of the Syrians, especially those living in Mt. Lebanon villages, buy *maloo* sheep. If you travel in the Holy Land in September you will see a *maloo* sheep tethered by a rope around its neck to a mulberry in front of almost every house. This sheep soon becomes the idol of the whole family. From early dawn till late at night, with only short periods of rest between, this pet sheep is being literally stuffed with vine and mulberry leaves. Roll after roll is thrust into the side of its mouth by the left hand, while the right hand keeps holding on the front lest the sheep should try to throw out the fattening feed. It is also being bathed twice a day, more than any of us has ever been permitted to enjoy. It lives



FATTENING THE MALOOF SHEEP.

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a royal life. It has more feed and water than it really wants. It has a number of servants to attend to its needs. It never thinks of the flock-life, and never worries, and if you let it loose in a meadow it will not think of grazing.

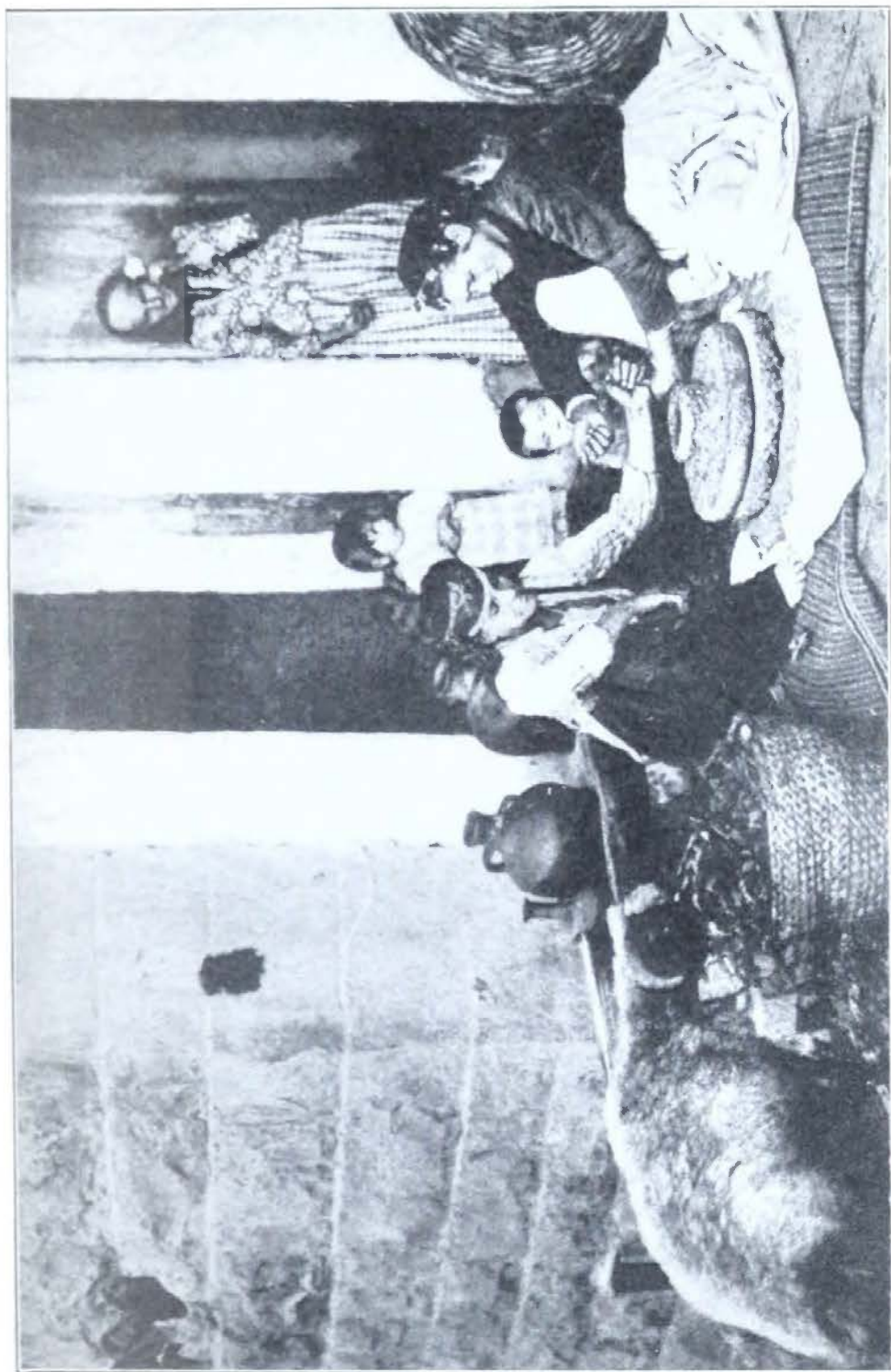
This is the sheep that speaks in the twenty-third psalm, and such is the life which is pictured in that immortal song of David. There is an interesting reference to such a pet-sheep, or to this aspect of the sheep-life, in II Sam. 12: 3, where it says, "But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter." This single pet-sheep of the twenty-third psalm says:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall

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not want anything. I have the tenderest of mulberry and vine leaves to eat, and the shadiest and coolest spot on God's earth to live in. I have a whole household to attend to my needs. They are all so generous and loving that they stuff me with feed until my jaws get tired and shut from weariness. I am bathed twice or more a day, and the earliest Egyptian priests never had so cool and clear a water as I have. Why, I am even considered as a member of my shepherd's family. Very often, especially when wolves are prowling around, I live with them under the same roof. I have forgotten the wilderness and the flock-life, and my heart is full of music.

“My shepherd comes to me at the coolest part of the day and takes me out for a walk. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. I do not think of



THE PET SHEEP BECOMES LIKE A MEMBER OF THE SHEPHERD'S FAMILY.

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grazing for I have enough feed at home. I lie down on the grass just as I used to do when I was a little lamb. The grass feels soft and comforting, and my heart leaps for joy.

“Then my shepherd leads me beside still crystalline water running over silvery pebbles in the midst of a real Eden. The sight of such pure water and the fragrance of the wild flowers growing on both sides of it invigorate me still more, and I run away from my shepherd. But he follows me and restores me to the paths of righteousness lest anybody should say anything against his stainless name. The vineyards are not fenced, for the Syrians are very hospitable, but no one would tolerate the passing of sheep into them.

“Then we reach the Valley of the Shadow of Death. O how I used once to dread this valley! This is the valley

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where venomous snakes lie in ambush, amid the thick grass by the roadside, ready to dart upon the unwary passerby and thrust their poison-dripping fangs in his ankle. This is the valley where wolves and leopards and hyenas have their lairs, and where the angel of death is day and night singing requiem to departed souls. The heaps of staring bones underneath the thick *carob* and the low bushy oak-growth tell many a sad tale of fearful growls and heart-rending cries, of blood-sucking and flesh-tearing, and of a ceaseless horrible butchery. Why, this Valley of the Shadow of Death, or Tselmawith, is the ancestral home of the wild beast, and woe to any creatures that venture there unarmed.

“But I walk through this valley as fearless as a soldier on parade, because my shepherd is with me. His rod and

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his staff they comfort me. Woe to the snake that will dare to show its head, or the wild beast that will dare to steal out of its lair, for my shepherd strides along in front of me brandishing his heavy oak rod in defiance of all the denizens of that dark valley. Once with one blow he cleft the head of a venturesome wolf in two, and as to the snakes which he has already sent back to the underworld, they are beyond my calculating powers.

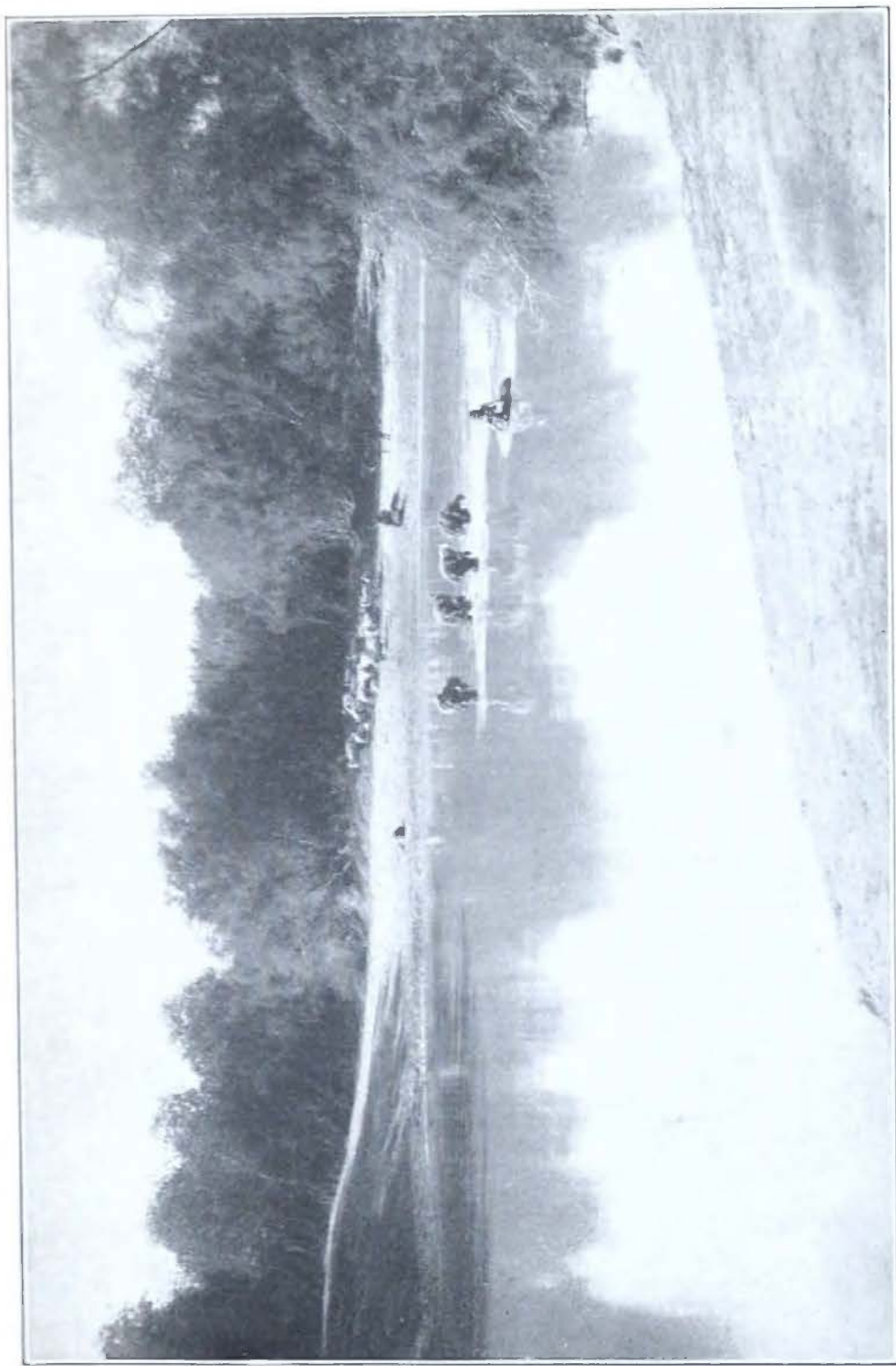
“Then all of a sudden I find myself on the bank of the great river that flows noiselessly at the lower end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Its water is deep blue and laden with the gruesome scum and driftwood of miles and miles of tortuous windings through endless forests. It is so canopied by weeping willows and gigantic black oaks and flanked by a very luxuriant growth of

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oleander that you do not see it until you stand on the bank.

“My shepherd looks at the tranquil river for a minute, and then begins making preparations to ford it. But I, ever timid and nervous, soon attempt to edge away from the water, suspecting instinctively that my shepherd has some preconceived plan in his mind for me. But quick as lightning he takes hold of me by my legs, flings me gently upon his shoulders, fords the river with me, and lays me on the other bank as safe as ever.

“For a minute I am so out of myself with joy that I gambol around my loving shepherd like a little lamb. He smiles down upon me, pats me on the head, and leads me up to a beautiful meadow, which is his own private property, just as I. This is the park where he often comes at eventide. The green grass is smiling all around, and



SHEPHERDS FORDING THE JORDAN WITH THE SHEEP ON THEIR SHOULDERS.

A New Twenty-Third Psalm

the leaves of the black oak are sparkling in their perennial verdure. A crystalline rivulet is trilling its wild music down the mulberry terraces on one side of the meadow, while scores of never-hoarse crickets are chirping the long summer hours away in tireless glee on the other. Here my shepherd builds up a crib for me, tethers me to it, and gives me a royal supper, just for a change. We have a picnic together: he eats grapes and green figs, while I delight myself with the tenderest grass. I turn around and behold mine enemies, the wolf and the leopard and the hyena, staring at me on the other side of the valley. But I bleat at them, emboldened by my knowledge of the well-tested strength of my shepherd's arm. My shepherd thus prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. He anoints my head with oil to convince me that I am his

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chosen sheep. He also fills my stone-trough with the coolest and the purest of water that I may drink after the picnic. O, I wish I could stay in my shepherd's park forever!"

That is how the twenty-third psalm reveals itself to me. It is the song of a single private sheep, or a pet one, and not of a sheep in a flock. Consequently, it is the song of a human being who feels that God is his own Shepherd, his and his only, and that he is the only sheep this Shepherd owns. This pet person imagines his Shepherd taking him out at eventide for a walk, or a picnic, and sings out the radiant feelings of his joyous heart in measured lines.

THE STILL WATERS

The still waters mentioned in the psalm could not have been stagnant or

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impure. A few years ago I spent a day at a beautiful spring on Mt. Lebanon called Naba' El-Barook, which is just below the Barook cedars. At about noon a large flock of goats broke over an adjacent hill, their bells making a great din, and rushed down to the water.

At the place where the Barook spring wells up from the ground there is a small round pool, clear as crystal, which, when the sun is shining upon it, presents a very fascinating appearance. From the lower side of the pool a charming brook rushes down under a low canopy of bramble and willow.

When the goats reached the pool they formed a long line along the edge of it, knelt like human beings, and drank their fill. Then they turned round and lay underneath the mulberries to rest. That water was still, but

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purser water could not have been found anywhere.

TSELMAWITH

The Valley of the Shadow of Death, or Tselmawith, was probably a valley somewhere in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. There is a valley at present near Beirut called "The Valley of the River of Death," another called "The Valley of the Blackbird," another near Damascus called "The Valley of the Horn," and another near my home called "The Valley of the Raven."

THE ROD

The rod is the club with which the shepherd kills snakes and wild beasts, and very often it is stuck to the front left side of his camel-hair cloak. But the staff is the long stick on which he

A New Twenty-Third Psalm

leans while watching the sheep. Sometimes he pats the sheep with it very gently on the head, thus cheering them up and encouraging them to push on into hard places.

SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION

As to the spiritual teaching of the twenty-third psalm, I will say only a little and leave the rest for you to infer. The most remarkable fact in this very popular psalm is the change in the pronoun. Notice carefully: The Lord is my shepherd. . . . *He* maketh me. . . . *He* leadeth me. . . . *He* restoreth my soul. . . . *He* leadeth me for *His* name's sake. . . . Then suddenly the singer flings aside the third person and jumps to the second: I shall fear no evil for *Thou* art with me. *Thy* rod and *Thy* staff. . . . *Thou* preparest. . . . *Thou*

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anointest. . . . This change in the pronoun takes place in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. How do we explain it?

The moment one is converted he is taken out for a promenade. To him God is a mysterious invisible reality. He lies down in the green pastures and feasts his eyes on the luxuriant growth of grass in the fields, on the marvelous teachings of God's Book. He looks admiringly at old Christians and envies the peace which he sees radiating from their hearts. He walks beside the still waters of the Spirit in the same attitude of wonder. The tempter prevails over him and he backslides. But the Good Shepherd restores him to the paths of righteousness and reveals to him the fact that unless he passes through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, unless he dies to the flesh, unless, as Paul ex-

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presses it, he reckons himself to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, he cannot enter upon the fulness of the pleasures of the Christian life. He obeys. Instantly the mist clears up and he sees God, the good Shepherd, face to face. Then he exclaims, "I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Then he passes through that electrifying experience recorded in the second chapter of Acts without which man's service to God cannot be but utter failure. He is being born again, or acclimated, and he instantly begins to feel an uncontrollable craving for spiritual food, and a hart-like panting after the water-brooks of God. He finds a table prepared before him and he eats with relish. Then his Shepherd pours oil on his head, making him one

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of those of whom Peter says, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pe. 2:9). Then his cup runs over, the overflow of that infilling by God's spirit becoming a blessing to humanity, and he experiences what Peter, the speaker of Pentecost, means when he says, "Ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pe. 1:8).

Another explanation may be given. Our journey on this side of the River of Death is a journey of faith. We believe in a God we have never seen, and we trust in a Saviour whose voice we have never heard. We tread along wearily, drawing nearer and nearer every day to the Valley of the Shadow

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of Death. Doubts assail us on every side, and there is nothing visible by which we could dispel the shadows of the tomb. Very often we cry with Job, "O that I knew where I might find him!"

At last we reach the River of Death where the silver cord must break and the visible world must be bidden adieu. Suddenly the wall of partition crumbles and the veil is torn asunder as if by magic, and a flood of light envelops us. Then we behold our God, our Shepherd, coming to meet us, and thus we begin to address Him with the pronoun *Thou* instead of *He*.

What a glorious revelation! Then "walking by faith is changed to walking by sight." Then *He* of our absent Lord becomes *Thou* of our present Saviour. Then the searchlights of Heaven will dispel the darkness of the

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Valley of the Shadow of Death and reveal to our wondering eyes the glittering royal path leading up to the beautiful City of our Shepherd. Then the sorrows of this world will be forgotten, and the joys of Heaven will swell the soul. "Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

After we enter the Golden Portals we hear a voice saying, "Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the lamb" (Rev. 19:9). We find a table prepared before us, and after supper we will be actually anointed as kings and priests. We will then understand what John means by saying, "And he (Christ) made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory

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and the dominion forever. Amen.”
(Rev. 1:6).

“Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever.” O wondrous star of beauty, the star that marks the culmination of our glorious career in our Shepherd’s service, do forever shine!

The Lord Is My Shepherd

He maketh - -



He leadeth - -

Thou anointest - -

He restoreth - -

Thou preparest - -

He leadeth - -

Thy rod - -

Thou art with me - -

The Valley of the Shadow of Death